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Former Public Official Sentenced for Participating in Bribery and Extortion Conspiracy

WASHINGTON – Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division announced that a former public official was sentenced Thursday for his role in a widespread bribery and extortion conspiracy, which operated from January 2002 through March 2004. The defendant, Barnum Haitshan, 35, was sentenced in the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona (Tucson Division) by the Honorable Cindy K. Jorgenson.

Haitshan, a former officer with the Arizona Department of Corrections, was sentenced to 15 months in prison, a \$4,000 fine, and three years supervised release. The charges arise from Operation Lively Green, an undercover investigation conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) that began in December 2001. Fifty-three additional defendants have been sentenced and two others have pleaded guilty and await sentencing.

The defendant had pleaded guilty to one count of conspiring to enrich himself by obtaining cash bribes from persons he believed to be narcotics traffickers, but who were in fact FBI Special Agents, in return for the defendant using his official position to assist, protect and participate in the activities of an illegal narcotics trafficking organization engaged in the business of transporting and distributing cocaine from Arizona to other locations in the southwestern United States. In order to protect the shipments of cocaine, the defendant wore his official uniform and carried official forms of identification, used official vehicles, and used his color of authority where necessary to prevent police stops, searches, and seizures of the narcotics as he drove the cocaine shipments on highways that passed through checkpoints manned by the U.S. Border Patrol, the Arizona Department of Public Safety, and Nevada law enforcement officers.

These cases are part of a joint investigation being conducted by the Southern Arizona Corruption Task Force (SACTF), which is comprised of the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at the Department of Homeland Security, and the Tucson Police Department. Though not part of the SACTF, the Arizona Air National Guard, Air Force Office of Special Investigations, Defense Criminal Investigative Service, and the Criminal Investigation Division of the Internal Revenue Service are also participating in the investigation. The cases are being prosecuted by Trial Attorneys Michael Ferrara, Andrew Levchuk, and Peter Koski of the U.S. Department of Justice, Criminal Division, Public Integrity Section, headed by Chief William M. Welch II. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Oklahoma has also secured the guilty pleas of 14 defendants in a related investigation, Operation Tarnish Star.

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